

Scepticism in the Global History of Philosophy

From Relativism to Scepticism

Relativist arguments for local scepticism

I. Zera Yacob (1599–1692)¹

1. [...] I thought, saying to myself: “Is everything that is written in the Holy Scriptures true?” Although I thought much [about these things] **I understood nothing**, so I said to myself: “**I shall go and consult scholars and thinkers; they will tell me the truth.**” But afterwards I thought, saying to myself: “What will men tell me other than what is in their heart?” Indeed **each one says: “My faith is right, and those who believe in another faith believe in falsehood, and are the enemies of God.”** These days the *fəranj* [lit. ‘Franks’, i.e. (Catholic) Europeans²] tell us: “Our faith is right, yours is false.” We on the other hand tell them: “It is not so; your faith is wrong, ours is right.” **If we also ask the Mohammedans and the Jews, they will claim the same thing, and who would be the judge for such a kind of argument?** No single human being: for all men are plaintiffs and defendants between themselves. (*Ḥatāta Zār’a Ya’əqob*, chapter IV; trans. Sumner 1976, p. 7)
2. And while I was teaching and interpreting the Books, I used to say: “The *fəranj* say this and this” or “The Copts say that and that,” and I did not say: “This is good, that is bad,” but I said: “All these things are good if we ourselves are good.” Hence **I was disliked by all: the Copts took me for a *fəranj*, the *fəranj* for a Copt.** (*Ḥatāta Zār’a Ya’əqob*, chapter II; trans. Sumner 1976, p. 5)
3. Once I asked a *fəranj* scholar many things concerning our faith; he interpreted them all according to his own faith. Afterwards I asked a well-known Ethiopian scholar and he also interpreted all things according to his own faith. If I had asked the Mohamedans and the Jews, they would also have interpreted according to their own faith; then, **where could I obtain a judge that tells the true? As my faith appears true to me, so does another one find his own faith true;** but truth is one. (*Ḥatāta Zār’a Ya’əqob*, chapter IV; trans. Sumner 1976, p. 7)
4. **To the person who seeks it, truth is immediately revealed.** Indeed he who investigates with the pure intelligence set by the creator in the heart of each man and scrutinizes the order and laws of creation, will discover the truth. (*Ḥatāta Zār’a Ya’əqob*, chapter V; trans. Sumner 1976, p. 9)
5. Similarly when I examine the remaining laws, such as the Pentateuch, the law of the Christians and the law of Islam, I find many things which disagree with the truth and the justice of our creator that our intelligence reveals to us. **God indeed has illuminated the heart of man with understanding by which we can see the good and evil**, recognize the licit and the illicit, distinguish truth from error, “and by your light we see the light, oh Lord!” **If we use this light of our heart properly, it cannot deceive us;** the purpose of this light which our creator gave us is to be saved by it, and not to be ruined. **Everything that the light of our intelligence shows us comes from the source of truth**, but what men say comes from the source of lies and our intelligence teaches us that all that the creator established is right. (*Ḥatāta Zār’a Ya’əqob*, chapter V; trans. Sumner 1976, p. 10)
6. **The law of nature is obvious, because our reason clearly propounds it**, if we examine it. But men do not like such inquiries; they choose to believe in the words of men rather than to investigate the will of their creator. (*Ḥatāta Zār’a Ya’əqob*, chapter VII; trans. Sumner 1976, p. 14)

¹ There is an ongoing scholarly dispute over the authorship of the *Ḥatāta Zār’a Ya’əqob* and the existence of its putative author, Zera Yacob. For a brief overview of the debate, see: <https://zerayacobconference.weebly.com/background.html> (the website of a recent Oxford conference dedicated to this topic). For references, see the bibliography below.

² The Ge’ez term *fəranj* is a corruption of the term ‘Frank’, widely used in the Eastern Orthodox world to refer to Catholic Europeans. The term is sometimes translated simply as ‘foreigners’ or ‘Europeans’.

7. There is a further great inquiry, [namely:] **all men are equal in the presence of God**; and all are intelligent, since they are his creatures; he did not assign one people for life, another for death, one for mercy, another for judgment. Our reason teaches us that this sort of discrimination cannot exist in the sight of God, who is perfect in all his works. [...] **Men quarrel among themselves; one says: "This is the truth:" another says: "No, that is false." All of them lie when they claim to attribute to the word of God the word of men.**" (*Ḥatāta Zār'a Ya'āqob*, chapter VI; trans. Sumner 1976, p. 12)

II. Abū Hāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (1058–1111) – Recap from week 1

1. You have asked me, my brother in religion, to convey to you the aim and secrets of the sciences, as well as the confusing intricacies of creeds, and to relate what I have endured in **extricating truth from the mayhem of factions, with their differing approaches and methods**, and how I have ventured to raise myself from the depths of conformity to the heights of insight. (*The Rescuer from Error*, §77)
2. [...] you should know that the **differences among people in sects and religions**, and the **divergences among the masters of various creeds, factions, and methods**, is a deep ocean in which many have drowned and from which only a few have been saved. **Each faction claims that they are [79] saved, and "each is content with what they have"** [cf. Qur'ān 23:53, 30:32]. (*The Rescuer from Error*, §§78-9)
3. The thirst for apprehending things as they really are has been my preoccupation and principle from a very early age. It is part of my God-given instinct and nature, a matter of temperament not of choice or invention. Hence, I was freed from the bonds of conformity [*taqlīd*] and **my inherited beliefs were shattered** while I was just a boy, **since I observed that Christian boys grew up only to be Christians, Jewish boys only to be Jewish, and Muslim boys only to be Muslim**. (*The Rescuer from Error*, §81)

III. Xenophanes (late 6th–early 5th century BCE)

1. The Ethiopians say that their gods are snub-nosed and black, the Thracians that theirs have light blue eyes and red hair. (DK 21 B16)
2. But if cattle and horses or lions had hands, or were able to draw with their hands and do the works that men can do, horses would draw the forms of the gods like horses, and cattle like cattle, and **they would make their bodies such as they each had themselves**. (DK21 B15)
3. But mortals consider that the gods are born, and that they have clothes and speech and **bodies like their own**. (DK21 B14)
4. Homer and Hesiod have attributed to the gods everything that is a shame and reproach men, stealing and committing adultery and deceiving each other. (DK21 B11; trans. KRS pp. 168-169)
5. One god, greatest among gods and men, **in no way similar to mortals either in body or in thought**. (DK21 B23; trans. KRS p. 169)
6. No man knows, or ever will know, the truth about the gods and about everything I speak of (*hassa legō peri pantōn*); for even if one chanced to say the complete truth, yet oneself knows it not; but seeming/opinion (*dokos*) is wrought upon all things/people (*epi pasi*). (DK21 B34; trans. KRS p. 179; modified)

Relativist arguments for radical scepticism

IV. Zhuangzi (4th century BCE?)³

1. Confucians vs Mohists

And so we have the ‘That’s it, that’s not’ [*shi fei*] of Confucians and Mohists, by which what is it for one of them for the other is not, what is not for one of them for the other is. If you wish to affirm what they deny and deny what they affirm, the best means is Illumination. (*Zhuangzi*, chapter 2; trans. Graham 2001 [1981], p. 52)

- See Mengzi (Confucian): “Loving one’s parents is benevolence... What is left to be done is simply the extension of these to the whole Empire” (*Mengzi* 7A15; trans. Lau 2004 [1970], p. 148)
 - Cf. Kongzi [Confucius]: “The Government of She said to Confucius, ‘In our village there is a man nicknamed “Straight body”. When his father stole a sheep, he gave evidence against him.’ Confucius answered, ‘In our village those who are straight are quite different. Fathers cover up for their sons, and sons cover up for their fathers. Straightness is to be found in such behaviour.’” (*Analects* 13.18; trans. Lau 1979, p. 121)
- See Mozi (founder of Mohism): “The task of the benevolent person is surely to diligently seek to promote the benefit of the world and eliminate harm to the world.” (*Mozi* 16.1a; trans. Fraser 2020, p. 56)

2. The infinite regress argument⁴

You and I having been made to argue over alternatives, if it is you not I that wins, is it really you who are on to it, I who am not? If it is I not you that wins, is it really I who am on to it, you who are not? Is one of us on to it and the other of us not? Or are both of us on to it and both of us not? If you and I are unable to know where we stand, others will surely be in the dark because of us. **Whom shall I call in to decide it? If I get someone of your party to decide it, being already of your party how can he decide it? If I get someone of my party to decide it, being already of my party how can he decide it?** If I get someone of a party different from either of us how can he decide it? I get someone of the same party as both of us to decide it, being already of the same party as both of us how can he decide it? Consequently you and I and he are all unable to know where we stand, and shall we find someone else to depend on? (*Zhuangzi*, chapter 2; trans. Graham 2001 [1981], p. 60)

3. If everyone’s reasoning has authority, whose reasoning is authoritative?

But if you go by the complete heart-mind (*xin*) and take it as your master, who is without such a master? (*Zhuangzi*, chapter 2; trans. trans. Graham 2001 [1981], p. 50; modified)

³ Scholars who think someone by the name of Zhuangzi (Master Zhuang, a.k.a. Zhuang Zhou) existed and authored part of the eponymous text conjecture that he lived around the 4th century BCE, in the Warring States period (ca. 453-221 BCE). This is based on the biographical note provided by the court historian Sima Qian (138-86 BCE) in the *Shiji* (*Record of the Grand Historian*). While scholars agree that the *Zhuangzi* as a whole was not written by a single person, they disagree concerning the details of the various layers of authorship of the text, and whether, crucially, any of these can be securely attributed to the historical person Zhuangzi in the Warring States period (for the authorship debate, see the references in the bibliography below). The earliest extant version of the received text that has come down to us is by Guo Xiang (d. 312 CE), a thinker associated with the ‘neo-Daoist’ or xuan xue school in the Wei-Jin period (ca. 220-420 CE).

⁴ Compare Nāgārjuna: “If such objects are established for you by way of a means of knowing (*pramāṇa*), tell me how you establish those means of knowing [themselves]. If the means of knowing are established through other means of knowing, then there is an infinite regress.” (*Vigrahavyāvartanī* [‘Dispeller of Disputes’], 31-2; trans. Bhattacharya 1986, p. 115; cited in Adamson & Ganeri 2020, p. 115). See also Sextus (Agrippa’s second mode) below.

4. Differences among animals (and differences in constitution)⁵

Gaptooth put a question to Wang Ni.

‘Would you know something of which all creatures agreed “That’s it [*shi*]”?’

‘How would I know that?’

‘Would you know what you did not know?’

‘How would I know that?’

‘Then does no creature know anything?’

‘How would I know that? However, let me try to say it – **“How do I know that what I call knowing is not ignorance? How do I know that what I call ignorance is not knowing?”**

Moreover, let me try a question on you. When a human sleeps in the damp his waist hurts and he gets stiff in the joints; is that so of the loach? When he sits in a tree he shivers and shakes; is that so of the ape? **Which of these three knows the right place to live?**

Mao Qiang and Lady Li were beautiful in the eyes of men; but when the fish saw them they plunged deep, when the birds saw them they flew high, when the deer saw them they broke into a run. **Which of these four knows what is truly beautiful in the world?**

(*Zhuangzi*, chapter 2; trans. Graham (2001 [1981], p. 58)

5. ‘Happy’ fish & the problem of anthropocentric bias

Zhuangzi and Huizi were strolling (*you*) on the dam of the Hao River. Zhuangzi said, “How these minnows jump out of the water and play about (*you*) at their ease (*cong rong*)! This is fish being happy (*le*)!”

Huizi said: “You, sir, are not a fish, how (*an*) do you know (*zhi*) what the happiness of fish is?”

Zhuangzi replied: “You, sir, are not me, how (*an*) do you know (*zhi*) that I do not know (*bu zhi*) what the happiness of fish is?”

Huizi said: “I am not you, sir, so I inherently don’t know you; but you, sir, are inherently no fish, and that you don’t know (*bu zhi*) what the happiness of fish is, is [now] fully [established].”

Zhuangzi replied: “Let’s return to the roots [of this conversation]. By asking “how (*an*) do you know (*zhi*) the happiness of fish,” you already knew (*zhi*) that I know (*zhi*) it, and yet you asked me; I know (*zhi*) it by standing overlooking the Hao River.

(*Zhuangzi*, chapter 17; trans. Meyer 2015, p. 335)

⁵ Compare Aenesidemus’ 1st and 7th modes below.

V. Sextus Empiricus (2nd or 34d cent. CE)

1. Aenesidemus' ten modes (*tropoi*) of suspension of judgement (*PH I* 31-163)

(1) Differences among animals

First, we said, is the **argument according to which animals, depending on the differences among them, do not receive the same appearances from the same things**. This we deduce both from the differences in the ways in which they are produced and from the variation in the composition of their bodies.

[...] **Sea-water is unpleasant to humans when they drink it, and poisonous, but it is very pleasant and drinkable to fish.**⁶

(*PH I* 40, 55; trans. Annas & Barnes 2011 [2000], p. 13, p. 16)

(2) Differences among human beings

The second, we said, was the mode deriving from the differences among humans. For even were one to concede by way of hypothesis that humans are more convincing than the irrational animals, we shall find that suspension of judgement is brought in insofar as our differences go.

There are two things from which humans are said to be composed, soul and body, and in both these we differ from one another.

[...] **The chief indication of the great – indeed infinite – differences among humans with regard to their intellect is the dispute among the Dogmatists about various matters** and in particular about what we should choose and what reject.

(*PH I* 79-85; trans. Annas & Barnes 2011 [2000], pp. 22-23)

(3) Differences in constitutions of the sense-organs

(4) Differences in circumstances

(5) Differences in positions, distances and places

(6) Differing admixtures

(7) Differences in quantities and constitutions

(8) Relativity

The eight mode is the one deriving from relativity, by which we conclude that, since everything is relative, we shall suspend judgement as to what things are independently and in their nature. It should be recognized that here, as elsewhere, **we use 'is' loosely, in the sense of 'appears'**, implicitly saying **'Everything appears relative'**.

But this has two senses: first, **relative to the subject judging** (for the external existing object which is judged appears relative to the subject judging), and second, **relative to the things observed together with it** (as right is relative to left). We have in fact already deduced that everything is relative, i.e. **with respect to the subject judging (since each thing appears relative to a given animal and a given human and a given sense and a given circumstance)**, and with respect to the things observed together with it (since each thing appears relative to a given admixture and a given composition and quantity and position).

(*PH I* 135; trans. Annas & Barnes 2011 [2000], p. 35)

(9) Differences in the frequency of encounters

⁶ The example comes from Heraclitus (DK22 B61).

(10) Differing ways of life, customs, laws, mythical beliefs, philosophical opinions

The tenth mode, which especially bears on **ethics**, is the one depending on persuasions and customs and laws and beliefs in myth and dogmatic suppositions. A persuasion is a choice of life or of a way of acting practised by one person or by many (for example, by Diogenes or by the Spartans). A law is a written contract among citizens, transgressors of which are punished, A custom or usage (there is no difference) is a common acceptance by a number of people of a certain way of acting, transgressors of which are not necessarily punished. [...] A belief in myth is an acceptance of matters which did not occur and are fictional – examples include the myths of Cronus, which many people find convincing. A dogmatic supposition is an acceptance of a matter which seems to be supported by abduction or proof of some kind, for example, that there are atomic elements of thing, or homoeomerics, or least parts, of some things.

We oppose each of these sometimes to itself, sometimes to one of the others.

For example, we oppose custom to custom like this: some of the Ethiopians tattoo their babies, while we do not; [...]

We oppose dogmatic suppositions to one another when we say that some people assert that there is one element, others infinitely many; some that the soul is mortal, others immortal; some that human affairs are directed by divine providence, others non-providentially. [...]

Custom is opposed to dogmatic supposition: with us it is the custom to ask for good things from the gods, while Epicurus says that the divinity pays no attention to us [...]

(PH I 145-155; trans. Annas & Barnes 2011 [2000], p. 37-39)

2. Agrippa's five modes (*tropoi*) of suspension of judgement (PH I 164-77)

(1) The **Dispute** mode (*apo tēs diaphōnias*)

According to the mode deriving from dispute, we find that undecidable dissension about the matter proposed has come about both in ordinary life and among philosophers. Because of this we are not able to choose or to rule out anything, and we end up with suspension of judgement. (PH I 165; trans. Annas & Barnes 2011 [2000], p. 41)

(2) The **Infinite Regress** mode (*eis apeiron ekballon*)

In the mode deriving from infinite regress, we say that what is brought forward as a source of conviction for the matter proposed itself needs another such source, which itself needs another, and so on *ad infinitum*, so that we have no point from which to begin to establish anything, and suspension of judgement follows. (PH I 166; trans. Annas & Barnes 2011 [2000], p. 41)

(3) The **Relativity** mode (*apo tou pros ti*)

In the mode deriving from relativity, as we said above⁷, the existing object appears to be such-and-such relative to the subject judging and to the things observed together with it, **but we suspend judgement on what it is like in its nature**. (PH I 167; trans. Annas & Barnes 2011 [2000], p. 41)

(4) The **Hypothetical** mode (*hypothetikos*)

We have the mode from hypothesis when the Dogmatists, being thrown back *ad infinitum*, begin from something which they do not establish but claim to assume simply and without proof in virtue of a concession. (PH I 168; trans. Annas & Barnes 2011 [2000], p. 41)

(5) The **Reciprocal** or Circularity mode (*diallēlos*)

The reciprocal mode occurs when what ought to be confirmatory of the object under investigation needs to be made convincing by the object under investigation; then, being unable to take either in order to establish the other, we suspend judgment about both. (PH I 169; trans. Annas & Barnes 2011 [2000], p. 41)

⁷ A reference to Aenesidemus' 8th mode – that of relativity – at PH I 135-6.

Primary texts

- Al-Ghazali, *The Rescuer from Error*. In Muhammad Ali Khalidi (ed. and trans.). *Medieval Islamic Philosophical Writings*, 59–98. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. [esp. pp. 59–64, down to the end of §88]
- Kongzi [Confucius] in D.C. Lau (trans.). *Confucius: The Analects*. London: Penguin Books, 1979.
- Mengzi [Mencius] in D.C. Lau (trans.). *Mencius*. Revised Edition. London: Penguin Books, 2004 [1970].
- Mozi in Chris Fraser (trans.) *Mōzī: The Essential Mōzī*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Sextus Empiricus in Julia Annas and Jonathan Barnes (trans. and ed.). *Outlines of Scepticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011 [2000].
- Xenophanes in G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven, and M. Schofield (eds. and trans.). *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 2nd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. [abbreviated as ‘KRS’; see pp. 168–169 for B11, 14, 15, 16]
- Zera Yacob in Claude Sumner. *Ethiopian Philosophy, Vol. II: The Treatise of Zera Yaacob and Walda Hewat: Text and Authorship*. Addis Ababa: Commercial Printing Press, 1976. [pp. 3–25]
- Zhuangzi in Dirk Meyer. “Truth Claim with No Claim to Truth: Text and Performance of the ‘Qiushui’ Chapter of the *Zhuangzi*”. In *Literary Forms of Argument in Early China*, edited by Joachim Gentz and Dirk Meyer, 297–340. Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2015. [translation with commentary of ch. 17 of the *Zhuangzi*]
- Zhuangzi in Angus C. Graham (trans.). *Chuang-Tzu: The Inner Chapters*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2001 [1981]. [Partial translation of the *Zhuangzi*]
- Zhuangzi in Brook Ziporyn (trans. and ed.). *Zhuangzi: The Essential Writings, With Selection From Traditional Commentaries*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2009. [Partial translation of the *Zhuangzi*]
- Zhuangzi in Brook Ziporyn (trans. and ed.). *Zhuangzi: The Complete Writings*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2020. [complete translation of the *Zhuangzi*]

Further reading

***The Ḥatāta Zār’a Ya’əqob (and the dispute over the text’s authorship)*⁸**

On Zera Yacob’s philosophy and the Ḥatāta

- Kiros, Teodos. “The Meditations of Zera Yaqub”. Paper given at the Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy in Boston, Massachusetts from August 10–15, 1998. Source: <http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Afri/AfriKiro.htm>, visited on 8 March 2023. [Offers a comparison between the philosophies of Descartes and Zera Yacob]
- Kiros, Teodos. *Zera Yaqob: Rationality of the Human Heart*. Lawrenceville, NJ / Asmara: Red Sea Press, 2005. [one of the few book-length studies of Zera Yacob’s philosophy]
- Sumner, Claude. “The Significance of Zera Yacob’s Philosophy.” *Ultimate Reality and Meaning* 22, no. 3 (1999): 172–188 [A summary of the nature and importance of Zera Yacob’s philosophy, from his most influential scholar; accessible online [here](#)]

On the authorship dispute

- Haile, Getatchew. “The Discourse of Wārqe: Commonly Known as Ḥatāta zā-Zār’a Ya’əqob.” *Ethiopian Studies in Honour of Amha Asfaw*. New York: self-published. [argues for authenticity, with the qualification that the supposed forger of the text, Giusto D’Urbino, tampered with the original text]
- Mbodj-Pouye, Aïssatou and Anaïs Wion. “The History of a Genuine Fake Philosophical Treatise (Ḥatātā Zār’a Yā’eqob and Ḥatātā Walda Ḥeywat). Introduction: Investigating an Investigation.” Translated by Lea Cantor, Jonathan Egid, and Anaïs Wion. *Afriques* (2021). Originally published in French as “L’histoire d’un vrai faux traité philosophique (Ḥatātā Zār’a Yā’Eqob et Ḥatātā Walda Ḥeywat). Introduction : Enquête sur une enquête.” *Afriques* (2013). [the first of three papers arguing for the hypothesis of forgery; available open access [here](#)]
- Wion, Anaïs. “The History of a Genuine Fake Philosophical Treatise (Ḥatātā Zār’a Yā’eqob and Ḥatātā Walda Ḥeywat). Episode 1: The Time of Discovery. From Being Part of a Collection to Becoming a Scholarly Publication (1852–1904).” Translated by Lea Cantor, Jonathan Egid and Anaïs Wion. *Afriques* (2021). Originally published in French as “L’histoire d’un vrai faux traité philosophique (Ḥatātā Zār’a Yā’eqob et Ḥatātā Walda Ḥeywat). Épisode 1 : Le temps de la découverte. De l’entrée en collection à l’édition scientifique (1852–1904).” *Afriques* (2013). [the second of Wion’s papers arguing for the hypothesis of forgery; available open access [here](#)]
- Wion, Anaïs. “The History of a Genuine Fake Philosophical Treatise (Ḥatātā Zār’a Yā’eqob and Ḥatātā Walda Ḥeywat). Episode 2: The Time of Debunking, The Time in the Wilderness (from 1916 to the 1950s).” Translated by Lea Cantor, Jonathan Egid and Anaïs Wion. *Afriques* (2021). Originally published in French as “L’histoire d’un vrai faux traité philosophique (Ḥatātā Zār’a Yā’eqob et Ḥatātā Walda Ḥeywat). Épisode 2 : Le temps de la démystification et la traversée du désert (de 1916 aux années 1950).” *Afriques* (2013). [the third of Wion’s papers arguing for the hypothesis of forgery; available open access [here](#)]

⁸ Podcast recordings of a recent Oxford conference on Zera Yacob (addressing both his philosophy and the authorship dispute) are available [here](#).

Sceptical themes in al-Ghazālī

[see week 1 handout]

Sceptical themes in Xenophanes

- Bryan, Jenny. "Xenophanes' Fallibilism". In *Likeness and Likelihood in the Presocratics and Plato*, 6-57. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Leshner, J. H. *Xenophanes of Colophon: Fragments: A Text and Translation with a Commentary*. University of Toronto Press, 1992. [consult *ad locum*]
- Leshner, J. H. "The Humanizing of Knowledge in Presocratic Thought." In *The Oxford Handbook of Presocratic Philosophy*, edited by Patricia Curd and Daniel Graham, 458–84. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Tor, Shaul. "Xenophanes on divine disclosure and mortal inquiry". *Mortal and Divine in Early Greek Epistemology: A Study of Hesiod, Xenophanes and Parmenides*, 104-154. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Sceptical themes in the Zhuangzi and the question of its authorship

Sceptical themes

- Chong, Kim Chong (ed.). *Dao Companion to the Philosophy of the Zhuangzi*. Cham: Springer, 2022.
- Hansen, Chad. "A Tao of Tao in Chuang-tzu". In *Experimental Essays on Chuang-tzu*, edited by Victor H. Mair, 24–55. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983.
- Hansen, Chad. *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought: A Philosophical Interpretation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000 [1992].
- Ivanhoe, Philip J. "Was Zhuangzi a Relativist?." In *Essays on Skepticism, Relativism, and Ethics in the Zhuangzi*, edited by Paul Kjellberg and Philip J. Ivanhoe, 196–214. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996.
- Ivanhoe, Philip J. "Zhuangzi on Skepticism, Skill, and the Ineffable Dao". *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 61, no. 4 (1993): 639–54.
- Kjellberg, Paul. "Skepticism, Truth, and the Good Life: A Comparison of Zhuangzi and Sextus Empiricus." *Philosophy East and West* 44, no. 1 (1994): 111–33. [Comparative study of *Zhuangzi* and Sextus]
- Raphals, Lisa. "Skeptical Strategies in the *Zhuangzi* and *Theaetetus*." *Philosophy East and West* 44, no. 3 (1994): 501–26. [comparison to sceptical themes in Plato's *Theaetetus* & Sextus]
- Schwitzgebel, Eric. "Zhuangzi's Attitude Toward Language and His Skepticism". In *Essays on Skepticism, Relativism, and Ethics in the Zhuangzi*, edited by Paul Kjellberg and Philip J. Ivanhoe, 68–96. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996. [Defends 'therapeutic skepticism']
- Wong, David B. "Zhuangzi and the Obsession with Being Right." *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (2005): 91-10. [Reads Zhuangzi as a radically interrogative scepticism; useful discussion of the infinite regress argument; relates the issue of cross-species difference to radical epistemological scepticism in the *Zhuangzi*]
- Wong, David B. "Constructive Skepticism and Being a Mirror in the *Zhuangzi*." *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 44, no. 1-2 (2017): 53-70. [builds on and further defends the sceptical interpretation defended in Wong (2005); see also Wong's chapter in Chong's *Dao Companion to the Philosophy of the Zhuangzi*]

The 'happy fish' passage & the critique of anthropomorphism

- Ames, Roger and Takahiro Nakajima (eds.). *Zhuangzi and the Happy Fish*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2015. [a collection of the major essays published up until 2015 on the 'happy fish' passage]
- Beaney, Michael. "XIV—Swimming Happily in Chinese Logic." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 121, no. 3 (2021): 355-79. [includes an up-to-date overview of the range of interpretations of the 'happy fish' passage]
- Cantor, Lea. "Zhuangzi on 'happy Fish' and the Limits of Human Knowledge." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 28, no. 2 (2020): 216-30. [close reading of the 'happy fish' passage, alongside discussion of the epistemology of ch. 2]
- Hansen, Chad. "The Relatively Happy Fish". *Asian Philosophy* 13 (2003): 145–64. [a highly influential reading of the 'happy fish' passage; also reproduced in Ames & Nakajima 2015]
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The authorship question

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⁹ For Xenophanes, see the section above.